

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

themselves to earth ; and, when they do so, I who am Light will give them that light which shall be necessary to Holy Church. And, when they have seen among themselves what should be done, let them report it to My vicar, with true unity, promptly, boldly, and with great deliberation, and he will be constrained not to resist their good wills, because he has a holy and good intention.'¹

" My tongue is not sufficient to narrate such great mysteries, nor what the understanding saw and the affection conceived. The day passed, full of wonder, and the evening came. And feeling my heart so drawn by affection of love that I could make no resistance to it, but must needs go to the place of prayer, and feeling that disposition come which I had at the time of death,² I knelt down with very great self-reproach, because I served the Spouse of Christ with great ignorance and negligence, and was the cause through which others did the same. Rising up, with the impression before the eye of my understanding of what I have said, God placed me before Himself, albeit I am always present to Him, because He contains all things in Himself; but in a new way, as though memory, understanding, and will had nought to do with my body. And with such great light did it contemplate this Truth, that in this abyss were then renewed the mysteries of Holy Church, and all the graces past and present received in my life, and the day on which *my* soul was espoused in faith.³ All these things passed away from my mind, through the fire that had waxed stronger ; and I attended only to what could be done to make a sacrifice of myself to God for Holy Church, and to remove the neglect and ignorance of those whom God had put into my hands. Then the demons cried out terribly against me, looking by the dread they inspired to impede and slacken my free and flaming desire. They struck against the outward body ; but

¹ This was evidently to be the subject of the letter to three cardinals, which she found herself unable to write.

² *i.e.* in 1370.

³ *E il f che infidejv sposata l' anima mia.* So the Casanatense MS., with which Fra Tommaso's Latin version corresponds.